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12th District

David P. Barry
Executive Director

Wednesday, August 9, 2017 10:00 a.m.

House Room 1, Capitol Building

The Joint Commission on Technology and Science (JCOTS) held its second meeting of the 2017 Interim on Wednesday, August 9, in Richmond. Delegate Rich Anderson, chairman of JCOTS, called the meeting to order.

The meeting began with staff calling roll. Six members were present, but because no binding action was necessary, the meeting proceeded without a quorum.

The first presentation was given by Chris Jackson of CeCredential Trust, a division of Paradigm, Inc. Mr. Jackson explained that because diplomas, certifications, and licenses are valuable in attaining jobs, there is a widespread issue of fraud surrounding them. He provided a video clip from a national news source that outlined the ease of obtaining false documents and the lack of legal remedies in protecting valid documents. According to the video clip, it can be illegal to use false documents, but it is legal to buy them. Mr. Jackson indicated that in order to have both portability to use documents and security in their validity, his company validates official documents with tamper-proof pdfs. The technology allows employers, school officials, and other interested parties to use the official website of the document issuer to validate a document using the unique code assigned to it.

After Mr. Jackson's presentation, Delegate Davis thanked Mr. Jackson and stated that his purpose in inviting Mr. Jackson was to introduce the topic as one that the full commission might be interested to recommend to the General Assembly in 2018. Chairman Anderson stated that the topic was clearly one of importance, and he asked that Delegate Davis work on draft legislation with staff to present at the next full commission meeting.

Next, staff gave a report on the work group meeting that took place July 12, 2017, on the topic of House Bill 2459 (2017), which would prohibit selling wireless communications devices with picture-capturing technology to minors. The bill was referred to JCOTS by the House Courts of Justice Committee (Courts Committee). Staff reported that the bill's sponsor, Delegate Bob Marshall, presented the bill to the group consisting of JCOTS members, industry representatives, and constituents. Because of the broad nature of the bill, the many ways that a minor could obtain such a device, and the many other devices that could be used in place of a covered device, the group decided not to recommend the bill to the full commission. Following the meeting, staff circulated an amended

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version of the bill that was not adopted by the Courts Committee, but no action was taken by the group.

Staff next gave updates on two JCOTS studies that are currently underway. The first is a working group on the topic of Denbigh Aviation Academy (Denbigh). Denbigh is a magnet school in Newport News with a focus on piloting, aircraft maintenance, engineering, computers, and electronics. Staff reported that Denbigh will be presenting to a group of education officials, STEM representatives, and aviation and aerospace industry representatives to talk about Denbigh's curriculum and efforts to develop an experienced, capable workforce in the Commonwealth. This information will facilitate the group's interest in spreading Denbigh's success throughout the Commonwealth.

The second JCOTS study that staff reported on is a working group on the topic of FAA environmental regulations that impose difficult permitting burdens on aircraft maintenance and repair facilities in the Commonwealth. That project was originally intended to be undertaken by a subcommittee, but given the technical nature of the topic, the study will proceed at the direction of staff.

Following the report on JCOTS business, staff briefed the commission on a model statute published by the Uniform Laws Commission (ULC). The ULC is a group of appointed, volunteer attorneys representing every state that drafts and publishes model laws on subjects on which uniformity across the states is desirable and practicable. Upon publication, states are free to adopt the statutes into their own codes. The statute discussed, Regulation of Virtual Currency Businesses, sets out a uniform license for businesses that facilitate transactions between buyers and sellers of virtual currency, such as Bitcoin. Staff explained the underlying technology of Bitcoin, known as a blockchain, and outlined the major provisions of the uniform law. JCOTS members emphasized the importance of being aware of this new technology and its lasting impact in the future.

At the conclusion of the agenda items, Chairman Anderson invited Bob Matthias of Virginia Beach to speak regarding the high-speed cables that are nearing completion in the area. These cables connect Bilbao, Spain, to Virginia Beach and will be used to provide high-speed information from Europe to the entire U.S. Eastern Seaboard. The cables have more capacity than every other similar cable on the Eastern Seaboard combined. They will be operational next month. Mr. Matthias stated that the cables and accompanying hardware are adjacent to navy-owned easements, which provides plenty of land and electricity to power the project. The navy has reportedly been extremely cooperative in bringing in the cables. One concern that has been addressed is the fear that Russian-owned vessels could tap into the cables off the U.S. coast. Mr. Matthias stated that, at this time, the technology to do that at such a depth does not exist. Mr. Matthias said that the city intends to meet with U.S. Senator Tim Kaine about the project next month. There will be a technical briefing on the project at the next full JCOTS meeting on December 6, 2017.

Following the briefing by Mr. Matthias, Chairman Anderson asked if any member of the public wished to address the commission. Hearing none, Chairman Anderson adjourned the meeting.
